

## AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF

### THE PROPHECY OF

# ZECHARIAH

This prophecy is suitable to all, as the scope is to reprove for sin, and threaten God's judgments against the impenitent, and to encourage those that feared God, with assurances of the mercy God had in store for his church, and especially of the coming of the Messiah, and the setting up his kingdom in the world.

## CHAPTER 1

*An exhortation to repentance. (1-6) A vision of the ministry of angels. (7-17) The security of the Jews and the destruction of their enemies. (18-21)*

### **Zechariah 1:1**

**Vs. 1-6:** God's almighty power and sovereign dominion, should engage and encourage sinners to repent and turn to Him. It is very desirable to have the Lord of hosts for our friend, and very dreadful to have him for our enemy. Review what is past, and observe the message God sent by his servants, the prophets, to your fathers. Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings. Be persuaded to leave your sins, as the only way to prevent approaching ruin. What is become of our fathers, and of the prophets that preached to them? They are all dead and gone. Here they were, in the towns and countries where we live, passing and repassing in the same streets, dwelling in the same houses, trading in the same shops and exchanges, worshipping God in the same places. But where are they? When they died, there was not an end of them; they are in eternity, in the world of spirits, the unchangeable world to which we hasten apace. Where are they? Those of them who lived and died in sin, are in torment. Those

who lived and died in Christ, are in heaven; and if we live and die as they did, we shall be with them shortly and eternally. If they minded not their own souls, is that a reason why their posterity should ruin theirs also? The prophets are gone. Christ is a Prophet that lives for ever, but all other prophets have a period put to their office. Oh that this consideration had its due weight; that dying ministers are dealing with dying people about their never-dying souls, and an awful eternity, upon the brink of which both are standing! In another world, both we and our prophets shall live for ever: to prepare for that world ought to be our great care in this. The preachers died, and the hearers died, but the word of God died not; not one jot or tittle of it fell to the ground; for he is righteous.

### **Zechariah 1:7**

**Vs. 7-17:** The prophet saw a dark, shady grove, hidden by hills. This represented the low, melancholy condition of the Jewish church. A man like a warrior sat on a red horse, in the midst of this shady myrtle-grove. Though the church was in a low condition, Christ was present in the midst, ready to appear for the relief of his people. Behind him were angels ready to be employed by him, some in acts of judgment, others of mercy, others in mixed events. Would we know something of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, we must apply, not to angels, for they are themselves learners, but to Christ himself. He is ready to teach those humbly desirous to learn the things of God. The nations near Judea enjoyed peace at that time, but the state of the Jews was unsettled, which gave rise to the pleading that followed; but mercy must only be hoped for through Christ. His intercession for his church prevails. The Lord answered the Angel, this Angel of the covenant, with promises of mercy and deliverance. All the good words and comfortable words of the gospel we receive from Jesus Christ, as he received them from the Father, in answer to the prayer of his blood; and his ministers are to preach them to all the world. The earth sat still, and was at rest. It is not uncommon for the enemies of God to be at rest in sin, while his people are enduring correction, harassed by temptation, disquieted by fears of wrath, or groaning under oppression and persecution. Here are predictions which had reference to the revival of the Jews after the captivity, but those events were shadows of what shall take place in the church, after the oppression of the New Testament Babylon is ended.

**Zechariah 1:18**

**Vs. 18-21:** The enemies of the church threaten to cut off the name of Israel. They are horns, emblems of power, strength, and violence. The prophet saw them so formidable that he began to despair of the safety of every good man, and the success of every good work; but the Lord showed him four workmen empowered to cut off these horns. With an eye of sense we see the power of the enemies of the church; look which way we will, the world shows us that; but it is only with an eye of faith that we see it safe. The Lord shows us that. When God has work to do, he will raise up some to do it, and others to defend it, and to protect those employed in doing it. What cause there is to look up in love and praise to the holy and eternal Spirit, who has the same care over the present and eternal interests of believers, by the holy word bringing the church to know the wonderful things of salvation!

## CHAPTER 2

*The prosperity of Jerusalem. (1-5) The Jews called to return to their own land. (6-9) A promise of God's presence. (10-13)*

### **Zechariah 2:1**

**Vs. 1-5** The Son of David, even the Man Christ Jesus, whom the prophet sees with a measuring line in his hand, is the Master-Builder of his church. God notices the extent of his church, and will take care that whatever number of guests are brought to the wedding-supper, there shall be room. This vision means well to Jerusalem. The walls of a city, as they defend it, so they straiten its inhabitants; but Jerusalem shall be extended as freely as if it had no walls at all, yet shall be as safe as if it had the strongest walls. In the church of God there yet is room for other multitudes, more than man can number. None shall be refused who trust in Christ; and He never shuts out from heaven one true member of the church on earth. God will be a Wall of fire round them, which can neither be broken through nor undermined, nor can it be assailed without danger to those who attack. This vision was to have its full accomplishment in the gospel church, which is extended by admitting the Gentiles into it; and which has the Son of God for its Prince and Protector; especially in the glorious times yet to come.

### **Zechariah 2:6**

**Vs. 6-9:** If God will build Jerusalem for the people and their comfort, they must inhabit it for him and his glory. The promises and privileges with which God's people are blessed, should engage us to join them, whatever it costs us. When Zion is enlarged to make room for all God's Israel, it is the greatest madness for any of them to stay in Babylon. The captivity of a sinful state is by no means to be continued in, though a man may be easy in worldly matters. Escape for thy life, look not behind thee. Christ has proclaimed that deliverance to the captives, which he has himself wrought out, and it concerns every one to resolve that sin shall not have dominion over him. Those who would be found among God's children, must save themselves from this world, see <sup>440</sup>Acts 2:40. What Christ will do for his church, shall be an evident proof of God's care and affection. He that

touches you, touches the apple of his eye. This is a strong expression of God's love to his church. He takes what is done against her as done against the tenderest part of the eye, to which the least touch is a great offense. Christ is sent to be the Protector of his church.

 **Zechariah 2:10**

**Vs. 10-13:** Here is a prediction of the coming of Christ in human nature. Many nations in that day would renounce idolatry, and God will own those for his people who join him with purpose of heart. Glorious times are foretold as a prophecy of our Lord's coming and kingdom. God is about to do something unexpected, and very surprising, and to plead his people's cause, which had long seemed neglected. Silently submit to his holy will, and patiently wait the event; assured that God will complete all his work. He will ere long come to judgment, to complete the salvation of his people, and to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their sins.

## CHAPTER 3

*The restoration of the church. (1-5) A promise concerning the Messiah. (6-10)*

### **Zechariah 3:1**

**Vs. 1-5:** The angel showed Joshua, the high priest, to Zechariah, in a vision. Guilt and corruption are great discouragements when we stand before God. By the guilt of the sins committed by us, we are liable to the justice of God; by the power of sin that dwells in us, we are hateful to the holiness of God. Even God's Israel are in danger on these accounts; but they have relief from Jesus Christ, who is made of God to us both righteousness and sanctification. Joshua, the high priest, is accused as a criminal, but is justified. When we stand before God, to minister to him, or stand up for God, we must expect to meet all the resistance Satan's subtlety and malice can give. Satan is checked by one that has conquered him, and many times silenced him. Those who belong to Christ, will find him ready to appear for them, when Satan appears most strongly against them. A converted soul is a brand plucked out of the fire by a miracle of free grace, therefore shall not be left a prey to Satan. Joshua appears as one polluted, but is purified; he represents the Israel of God, who are all as an unequalled thing, till they are washed and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Israel now were free from idolatry, but there were many things amiss in them. There were spiritual enemies warring against them, more dangerous than any neighboring nations. Christ loathed the filthiness of Joshua's garments, yet did not put him away. Thus God by his grace does with those whom he chooses to be priests to himself. The guilt of sin is taken away by pardoning mercy, and the power of it is broken by renewing grace. Thus Christ washes those from their sins in his own blood, whom he makes kings and priests to our God. Those whom Christ makes spiritual priests, are clothed with the spotless robe of his righteousness, and appear before God in that; and with the graces of his Spirit, which are ornaments to them. The righteousness of saints, both imputed and implanted, is the fine linen, clean and white, with which the bride, the Lamb's wife, is arrayed, <sup>666</sup> Revelation 19:8. Joshua is restored to former honors and trusts. The crown of the priesthood is put on him.

When the Lord designs to restore and revive religion, he stirs up prophets and people to pray for it.

### **Zechariah 3:6**

**Vs. 6-10:** All whom God calls to any office he finds fit, or makes so. The Lord will cause the sins of the believer to pass away by his sanctifying grace, and will enable him to walk in newness of life. As the promises made to David often pass into promises of the Messiah, so the promises to Joshua look forward to Christ, of whose priesthood Joshua's was a shadow. Whatever trials we pass through, whatever services we perform, our whole dependence must rest on Christ, the Branch of righteousness. He is God's servant, employed in his work, obedient to his will, devoted to his honor and glory. He is the Branch from which all our fruit must be gathered. The eye of his Father was upon him, especially in his sufferings, and when he was buried in the grave, as the foundation-stones are underground, out of men's sight. But the prophecy rather denotes the attention paid to this precious Corner-stone. All believers, from the beginning, had looked forward to it in the types and predictions. All believers, after Christ's coming, would look to it with faith, hope, and love. Christ shall appear for all his chosen, as the high priest when before the Lord, with the names of all Israel graven in the precious stones of his breastplate. When God gave a remnant to Christ, to be brought through grace to glory, then he engraved this precious stone. By him sin shall be taken away, both the guilt and the dominion of it; he did it in one day, that day in which he suffered and died. What should terrify when sin is taken away? Then nothing can hurt, and we sit down under Christ's shadow with delight, and are sheltered by it. And gospel grace, coming with power, makes men forward to draw others to it.

## CHAPTER 4

*A vision of a candlestick, with two olive trees. (1-7) Further encouragement. (8-10) An explanation respecting the olive trees. (11-14)*

### **Zechariah 4:1**

**Vs. 1-7:** The prophet's spirit was willing to attend, but the flesh was weak. We should beg of God that, whenever he speaks to us, he would awaken us, and we should then stir up ourselves. The church is a golden candlestick, or lamp-bearer, set up for enlightening this dark world, and holding forth the light of Divine revelation. Two olive trees were seen, one on each side the candlestick, from which oil flowed into the bowl without ceasing. God brings to pass his gracious purposes concerning his church, without any art or labor of man; sometimes he makes use of his instruments, yet he needs them not. This represented the abundance of Divine grace, for the enlightening and making holy the ministers and members of the church, and which cannot be procured or prevented by any human power. The vision assures us that the good work of building the temple, should be brought to a happy end. The difficulty is represented as a great mountain. But all difficulties shall vanish, and all the objections be got over. Faith will remove mountains, and make them plains. Christ is our Zerubbabel; mountains of difficulty were in the way of his undertaking, but nothing is too hard for him. What comes from the grace of God, may, in faith, be committed to the grace of God, for he will not forsake the work of his own hands.

### **Zechariah 4:8**

**Vs. 8-10:** The exact fulfillment of Scripture prophecies is a convincing proof of their Divine original. Though the instruments be weak and unlikely, yet God often chooses such, to bring about great things by them. Let not the dawning light be despised; it will shine more and more to the perfect day. Those who despaired of finishing the work, shall rejoice when they see Zerubbabel giving directions what to do, and taking care that the work be done. It is a comfort to us that the same all-wise, almighty Providence, which governs the earth, is in particular conversant about the



church. All that have the plummet in their hands, must look up to the eyes of the Lord, have constant regard to Divine Providence, act in dependence on its guidance and submission to its disposals. Let us fix our faith on Christ, and view Him carrying on his work according to his own glorious plan, and daily bringing his spiritual building nearer to completion.

**Zechariah 4:11**

**Vs. 11-14:** Zechariah desires to know what are the two olive trees. Zerubbabel and Joshua, this prince and this priest, were endued with the gifts and graces of God's Spirit. They lived at the same time, and both were instruments in the work and service of God. Christ's offices of King and Priest were shadowed forth by them. From the union of these two offices in his person, both God and man, the fullness of grace is received and imparted. They built the temple, the church of God. So does Christ spiritually. Christ is not only the Messiah, the Anointed One himself, but he is the Good Olive to his church; and from his fullness we receive. And the Holy Spirit is the unction or anointing which we have received. From Christ the Olive Tree, by the Spirit the Olive Branch, all the golden oil of grace flows to believers, which keeps their lamps burning. Let us seek, through the intercession and bounty of the Savior, supplies from that fullness which has hitherto sufficed for all his saints, according to their trials and employments. Let us wait on him in his ordinances, desiring to be sanctified wholly in body, soul, and spirit.

## CHAPTER 5

*The vision of a flying roll. (1-4) The vision of a woman and an ephah. (5-11)*

### **Zechariah 5:1**

**Vs. 1-4:** The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are rolls, in which God has written the great things of his law and gospel; they are flying rolls. God's word runs very swiftly, <sup><1975></sup>Psalm 147:15. This flying roll contains a declaration of the righteous wrath of God against sinners. Oh that we saw with an eye of faith the flying roll of God's curse hanging over the guilty world as a thick cloud, not only keeping off the sunbeams of God's favor, but big with thunders, lightnings, and storms, ready to destroy them! How welcome then would the tidings of a Savior be, who came to redeem us from the curse of the law, being himself made a curse for us! Sin is the ruin of houses and families; especially the doing hurt to others and false witness. Who knows the power of God's anger? God's curse cannot be kept out by bars or locks. While one part of the curse of God ruins the substance of the sinner, another part will rest on the soul, and sink it to everlasting punishment. All are transgressors of the law, so we cannot escape this wrath of God, except we flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us in the gospel.

### **Zechariah 5:5**

**Vs. 5-11:** In this vision the prophet sees an ephah, something in the shape of a corn measure. This betokened the Jewish nation. They are filling the measure of their iniquity; and when it is full, they shall be delivered into the hands of those to whom God sold them for their sins. The woman sitting in the midst of the ephah represents the sinful church and nation of the Jews, in their latter and corrupt age. Guilt is upon the sinner as a weight of lead, to sink him to the lowest hell. This seems to mean the condemnation of the Jews, after they filled the measure of their iniquities by crucifying Christ and rejecting his gospel. Zechariah sees the ephah, with the woman thus pressed in it, carried away to some far country. This intimates that the Jews should be hurried out of their own land, and forced to dwell in far countries, as they had been in Babylon. There the ephah

shall be firmly placed, and their sufferings shall continue far longer than in their late captivity. Blindness is happened unto Israel, and they are settled upon their own unbelief. Let sinners fear to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath; for the more they multiply crimes, the faster the measure fills.

## CHAPTER 6

*The vision of the chariots. (1-8) Joshua, the high priest, crowned as a type of Christ. (9-15)*

### Zechariah 6:1

**Vs. 1-8:** This vision may represent the ways of Providence in the government of this lower world. Whatever the providences of God about us are, as to public or private affairs, we should see them all as coming from between the mountains of brass, the immoveable counsels and decrees of God; and therefore reckon it as much our folly to quarrel with them, as it is our duty to submit to them. His providences move swiftly and strongly as chariots, but all are directed and governed by his infinite wisdom and sovereign will. The red horses signify war and bloodshed. The black, signify the dismal consequences of war, famines, pestilences, and desolations. The white, signify the return of comfort, peace, and prosperity. The mixed color, signify events of different complexions, a day of prosperity and a day of adversity. The angels go forth as messengers of God's counsels, and ministers of his justice and mercy. And the secret motions and impulses upon the spirits of men, by which the designs of Providence are carried on, are these four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from God, and fulfill what the God of the spirits of all flesh appoints. All the events which take place in the world spring from the unchangeable counsels of the Lord, which are formed in unerring wisdom, perfect justice, truth, and goodness; and from history it is found that events happened about the period when this vision was sent to the prophet, which seem referred to therein.

### Zechariah 6:9

**Vs. 9-15:** Some Jews from Babylon brought an offering to the house of God. Those who cannot forward a good work by their persons, must, as they are able, forward it by their purses: if some find hands, let others fill them. Crowns are to be made, and put upon the head of Joshua. The sign was used, to make the promise more noticed, that God will, in the fullness of time, raise up a great High Priest, like Joshua, who is but the figure of one that is to come. Christ is not only the Foundation, but the Founder of

this temple, by his Spirit and grace. Glory is a burden, but not too heavy for Him to bear who upholds all things. The cross was His glory, and he bore that; so is the crown an exceeding weight of glory, and he bears that. The counsel of peace should be between the priest and the throne, between the priestly and kingly offices of Jesus Christ. The peace and welfare of the gospel church, and of all believers, shall be wrought, though not by two several persons, yet by two several offices meeting in one; Christ, purchasing all peace by his priesthood, maintaining and defending it by his kingdom. The crowns used in this solemnity must be kept in the temple, as evidence of this promise of the Messiah. Let us not think of separating what God has joined in his counsel of peace. We cannot come to God by Christ as our Priest, if we refuse to have him rule over us as our King. We have no real ground to think our peace is made with God, unless we try to keep his commandments.

## CHAPTER 7

*The captives' inquiry respecting fasting. (1-7) Sin the cause of their captivity. (8-14)*

### **Zechariah 7:1**

**Vs. 1-7:** If we truly desire to know the will of God in doubtful matters, we must not only consult his word and ministers, but seek his direction by fervent prayer. Those who would know God's mind should consult God's ministers; and, in doubtful cases, ask advice of those whose special business it is to search the Scriptures. The Jews seemed to question whether they ought to continue their fasts, seeing that the city and temple were likely to be finished. The first answer to their inquiry is a sharp reproof of hypocrisy. These fasts were not acceptable to God, unless observed in a better manner, and to better purpose. There was the form of duty, but no life, or soul, or power in it. Holy exercises are to be done to God, looking to his word as our rule, and his glory as our end, seeking to please him and obtain his favor; but self was the center of all their actions. And it was not enough to weep on fast days; they should have searched the Scriptures of the prophets, that they might have seen what was the ground of God's controversy with their fathers. Whether people are in prosperity or adversity, they must be called upon to leave their sins, and to do their duty.

### **Zechariah 7:8**

**Vs. 8-14:** God's judgments upon Israel of old for their sins, were written to warn Christians. The duties required are, not keeping fasts and offering sacrifices, but doing justly and loving mercy, which tend to the public welfare and peace. The law of God lays restraint upon the heart. But they filled their minds with prejudices against the word of God. Nothing is harder than the heart of a presumptuous sinner. See the fatal consequences of this to their fathers. Great sins against the Lord of hosts, bring great wrath from his power, which cannot be resisted. Sin, if regarded in the heart, will certainly spoil the success of prayer. The Lord always hears the cry of the broken-hearted penitent; yet all who die impenitent and

unbelieving, will find no remedy or refuge from miseries which while here they despised and defied, but which they then will not be able to bear.

## CHAPTER 8

*The restoration of Jerusalem. (1-8) The people encouraged by promises of God's favor, and exhorted to holiness. (9-17) The Jews in the latter days. (18-23)*

### Zechariah 8:1

**Vs. 1-8:** The sins of Zion were her worst enemies. God will take away her sins, and then no other enemies shall hurt her. Those who profess religion must adorn their profession by godliness and honesty. When become a city of truth and a mountain of holiness, Jerusalem is peaceable and prosperous. Verses 4, 5, beautifully describe a state of great outward peace, attended with plenty, temperance, and contentment. The scattered Israelites shall be brought together from all parts. God will never leave nor forsake them in a way of mercy, for this he has promised them; and they shall never leave nor forsake him in a way of duty, as they have promised him. These promises were partly fulfilled in the Jewish church, betwixt the captivity and the time of Christ's coming; and they had fuller accomplishment in the gospel church; but the full import must be as to the future times of the Christian church, or the future restoration of the Jews. With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible; so far are God's thoughts and ways above ours. In the present low state of vital godliness, we can hardly conceive that so complete a change can be made; but a change thus extensive and glorious, can be brought to pass by the almighty power of the new-creating Spirit, in less time than he was pleased to employ in creating the world. Let the hands of all who labor in the cause of the gospel be strong, serving the Lord in true holiness, assured that their labor shall not be in vain.

### Zechariah 8:9

**Vs. 9-17:** Those only who lay their hands to the plough of duty, shall have them strengthened with the promises of mercy: those who avoid their fathers' faults have the curse turned into a blessing. Those who believed the promises, were to show their faith by their works, and to wait the fulfillment. When God is displeased, he can cause trade to decay, and set every man against his neighbor; but when he returns in mercy, all is happy



and prosperous. Surely believers in Christ must not trifle with the exhortation to put away lying, and to speak every man peace with his neighbor, to hate what the Lord hates, and to love that wherein he delights.

 **Zechariah 8:18**

**Vs. 18-23:** When God comes towards us in ways of mercy, we must meet him with joy and thankfulness. Therefore be faithful and honest in all your dealings; and let it be a pleasure to you to be so, though thereby you come short of the gains others get dishonestly; and, as much as in you lies, live peaceably with all men. Let the truths of God rule in your heads, and let the peace of God rule in your hearts. Thus the ancient servants of God drew the notice of heathen neighbors, whose prejudices were softened. A great increase to the church shall be made. Hitherto the Jews had been prone to learn the idolatries of other nations: what more unlikely than that they should teach religion to their conquerors, and to all the principal nations of the earth! Yet this is expressly foretold, and it came to pass. Hitherto the prophecy has been wonderfully fulfilled, and no doubt future events will explain it further. It is good to be with those who have God with them; if we take God for our God, we must take his people for our people, and be willing to take our lot with them. But let not any one think that mere zeal, either for Jews or Gentiles, will stand in the place of personal religion. Let us be living epistles of Christ, known and read of all men, so that others may wish to go with us, and to have their portion with us in the realms of bliss.

## CHAPTER 9

*God's defense of his church. (1-8) Christ's coming and his kingdom. (9-11) Promises to the church. (12-17)*

### **Zechariah 9:1**

**Vs. 1-8:** Here are judgments foretold on several nations. While the Macedonians and Alexander's successors were in warfare in these countries, the Lord promised to protect his people. God's house lies in the midst of an enemy's country; his church is as a lily among thorns. God's power and goodness are seen in her special preservation. The Lord encamps about his church, and while armies of proud opposers shall pass by and return, his eyes watch over her, so that they cannot prevail, and shortly the time will come when no exactor shall pass by her any more.

### **Zechariah 9:9**

**Vs. 9-17:** The prophet breaks forth into a joyful representation of the coming of the Messiah, of whom the ancient Jews explained this prophecy. He took the character of their King, when he entered Jerusalem amidst the hosannas of the multitude. But his kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. It shall not be advanced by outward force or carnal weapons. His gospel shall be preached to the world, and be received among the heathen. A sinful state is a state of bondage; it is a pit, or dungeon, in which there is no water, no comfort; and we are all by nature prisoners in this pit. Through the precious blood of Christ, many prisoners of Satan have been set at liberty from the horrible pit in which they must otherwise have perished, without hope or comfort. While we admire Him, let us seek that his holiness and truth may be shown in our own spirits and conduct. These promises have accomplishment in the spiritual blessings of the gospel which we enjoy by Jesus Christ. As the deliverance of the Jews was typical of redemption by Christ, so this invitation speaks to all the language of the gospel call. Sinners are prisoners, but prisoners of hope; their case is sad, but not desperate; for there is hope in Israel concerning them. Christ is a Strong-hold, a strong Tower, in whom believers are safe from the fear of the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and the assaults of spiritual enemies. To him we must turn with lively faith; to him we must

flee, and trust in his name under all trials and sufferings. It is here promised that the Lord would deliver his people. This passage also refers to the apostles, and the preachers of the gospel in the early ages. God was evidently with them; his words from their lips pierced the hearts and consciences of the hearers. They were wondrously defended in persecution, and were filled with the influences of the Holy Spirit. They were saved by the Good Shepherd as his flock, and honored as jewels of his crown. The gifts, graces, and consolations of the Spirit, poured forth on the day of Pentecost, Act 2 and in succeeding times, are represented. Sharp have been, and still will be, the conflicts of Zion's sons, but their God will give them success. The more we are employed, and satisfied with his goodness, the more we shall admire the beauty revealed in the Redeemer. Whatever gifts God bestows on us, we must serve him cheerfully with them; and, when refreshed with blessings, we must say, How great is his goodness!

## CHAPTER 10

*Blessings to be sought from the Lord. (1-5) God will restore his people. (6-12)*

### **Zechariah 10:1**

**Vs. 1-5:** Spiritual blessings had been promised under figurative allusions to earthly plenty. Seasonable rain is a great mercy, which we may ask of God when there is most need of it, and we may look for it to come. We must in our prayers ask for mercies in their proper time. The Lord would make bright clouds, and give showers of rain. This may be an exhortation to seek the influences of the Holy Spirit, in faith and by prayer, through which the blessings held forth in the promises are obtained and enjoyed. The prophet shows the folly of making addresses to idols, as their fathers had done. The Lord visited the remnant of his flock in mercy, and was about to renew their courage and strength for conflict and victory. Every creature is to us what God makes it to be. Every one raised to support the nation, as a corner-stone does the building, or to unite those that differ, as nails join the different timbers, must come from the Lord; and those employed to overcome their enemies, must have strength and success from him. This may be applied to Christ; to him we must look to raise up persons to unite, support, and defend his people. He never will say, Seek ye me in vain.

### **Zechariah 10:6**

**Vs. 6-12:** Here are precious promises to the people of God, which look to the state of the Jews, and even to the latter days of the church. Preaching the gospel is God's call for souls to come to Jesus Christ. Those whom Christ redeemed by his blood, God will gather by his grace. Difficulties shall be got over easily, and effectually, as those in the way of the deliverance out of Egypt. God himself will be their strength, and their song. When we resist, and so overcome our spiritual enemies, then our hearts shall rejoice. If God strengthen us, we must bestir ourselves in all the duties of the Christian life, must be active in the work of God; and we must do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

## CHAPTER 11

*Destruction to come upon the Jews. (1-3) The Lord's dealing with the Jews. (4-14) The emblem and curse of a foolish shepherd. (15-17)*

### Zechariah 11:1

**Vs. 1-3:** In figurative expressions, that destruction of Jerusalem, and of the Jewish church and nation, is foretold, which our Lord Jesus, when the time was at hand, prophesied plainly and expressly. How can the fir trees stand, if the cedars fall? The falls of the wise and good into sin, and the falls of the rich and great into trouble, are loud alarms to those every way their inferiors. It is sad with a people, when those who should be as shepherds to them, are as young lions. The pride of Jordan was the thickets on the banks; and when the river overflowed the banks, the lions came up from them roaring. Thus the doom of Jerusalem may alarm other churches.

### Zechariah 11:4

**Vs. 4-14:** Christ came into this world for judgment to the Jewish church and nation, which were wretchedly corrupt and degenerate. Those have their minds woefully blinded, who do ill, and justify themselves in it; but God will not hold those guiltless who hold themselves so. How can we go to God to beg a blessing on unlawful methods of getting wealth, or to return thanks for success in them? There was a general decay of religion among them, and they regarded it not. The Good Shepherd would feed his flock, but his attention would chiefly be directed to the poor. As an emblem, the prophet seems to have taken two staves; Beauty, denoted the privileges of the Jewish nation, in their national covenant; the other he called Bands, denoting the harmony which hitherto united them as the flock of God. But they chose to cleave to false teachers. The carnal mind and the friendship of the world are enmity to God; and God hates all the workers of iniquity: it is easy to foresee what this will end in. The prophet demanded wages, or a reward, and received thirty pieces of silver. By Divine direction he cast it to the potter, as in disdain for the smallness of the sum. This shadowed forth the bargain of Judas to betray Christ, and

the final method of applying it. Nothing ruins a people so certainly, as weakening the brotherhood among them. This follows the dissolving of the covenant between God and them: when sin abounds, love waxes cold, and civil contests follow. No wonder if those fall out among themselves, who have provoked God to fall out with them. Willful contempt of Christ is the great cause of men's ruin. And if professors rightly valued Christ, they would not contend about little matters.

 **Zechariah 11:15**

**Vs. 15-17:** God, having showed the misery of this people in their being justly left by the Good Shepherd, shows their further misery in being abused by foolish shepherds. The description suits the character Christ gives of the scribes and Pharisees. They never do any thing to support the weak, or comfort the feeble-minded; but seek their own ease, while they are barbarous to the flock. The idol shepherd has the garb and appearance of a shepherd, receives submission, and is supported at much expense; but he leaves the flock to perish through neglect, or leads them to ruin by his example. This suits many in different churches and nations, but the warning had an awful fulfillment in the Jewish teachers. And while such deceive others to their ruin, they will themselves have the deepest condemnation.

## CHAPTER 12

*Punishment of the enemies of Judah. (1-8) Repentance and sorrow of the Jews. (9-14)*

### **Zechariah 12:1**

**Vs. 1-8:** Here is a Divine prediction, which will be a heavy burden to all the enemies of the church. But it is for Israel; for their comfort and benefit. It is promised that God will make foolish the counsels, and weaken the courage of the enemies of the church. The exact meaning is not clear; but God often begins by calling the poor and despised; and in that day even the feeblest will resemble David, and be as eminent in courage and every thing good. Desirable indeed is it that the examples and labors of Christians should render them as fire among wood, as a torch in a sheaf, to kindle the flame of Divine love, to spread religion on the right hand and on the left.

### **Zechariah 12:9**

**Vs. 9-14:** The day here spoken of, is the day of Jerusalem's defense and deliverance, that glorious day when God will appear for the salvation of his people. In Christ's first coming he bruised the serpent's head, and broke all the powers of darkness that fought against God's kingdom among men. In his second coming he will complete their destruction, when he shall put down all opposing rule, principality, and power; and death itself shall be swallowed up in that victory. The Holy Spirit is gracious and merciful, and is the Author of all grace or holiness. He, also, is the Spirit of supplications, and shows men their ignorance, want, guilt, misery, and danger. At the time here foretold, the Jews will know who the crucified Jesus was; then they shall look by faith to him, and mourn with the deepest sorrow, not only in public, but in private, even each one separately. There is a holy mourning, the effect of the pouring out of the Spirit; a mourning for sin, which quickens faith in Christ, and qualifies for joy in God. This mourning is a fruit of the Spirit of grace, a proof of a work of grace in the soul, and of the Spirit of supplications. It is fulfilled in all who sorrow for sin after a godly sort; they look to Christ crucified, and mourn for him. Looking by faith upon the cross of Christ will cause us to mourn for sin after a godly sort.

## CHAPTER 13

*The Fountain for the remission of sins, The conviction of the false prophets. (1-6) The death of Christ, and the saving of a remnant of the people. (7-9)*

### Zechariah 13:1

**Vs. 1-6:** In the time mentioned at the close of the foregoing chapter, a fountain would be opened to the rulers and people of the Jews, in which to wash away their sins. Even the atoning blood of Christ, united with his sanctifying grace. It has hitherto been closed to the unbelieving nation of Israel; but when the Spirit of grace shall humble and soften their hearts, he will open it to them also. This fountain opened is the pierced side of Christ. We are all as an unequaled thing. Behold a fountain opened for us to wash in, and streams flowing to us from that fountain. The blood of Christ, and God's pardoning mercy in that blood, made known in the new covenant, are a fountain always flowing, that never can be emptied. It is opened for all believers, who as the spiritual seed of Christ, are of the house of David, and, as living members of the church, are inhabitants of Jerusalem. Christ, by the power of his grace, takes away the dominion of sin, even of beloved sins. Those who are washed in the fountain opened, as they are justified, so they are sanctified. Souls are brought off from the world and the flesh, those two great idols, that they may cleave to God only. The thorough reformation which will take place on the conversion of Israel to Christ, is here foretold. False prophets shall be convinced of their sin and folly, and return to their proper employments. When convinced that we are gone out of the way of duty, we must show the truth of our repentance by returning to it again. It is well to acknowledge those to be friends, who by severe discipline are instrumental in bringing us to a sight of error; for faithful are the wounds of a friend, <sup>2076</sup> Proverbs 27:6. And it is always well for us to recollect the wounds of our Savior. Often has he been wounded by professed friends, nay, even by his real disciples, when they act contrary to his word.



**Zechariah 13:7**

**Vs. 7-9:** Here is a prophecy of the sufferings of Christ. God the Father gave order to the sword of his justice to awake against his Son, when he freely made his soul an offering for sin. As God, he is called “my Fellow.” Christ and the Father are one. He is the Shepherd who was to lay down his life for the sheep. If a Sacrifice, he must be slain, for without shedding of the life-blood there was no remission. This sword must awake against him, yet he had no sin of his own to answer for. It may refer to the whole of Christ’s sufferings, especially his agonies in the garden and on the cross, when he endured unspeakable anguish till Divine justice was fully satisfied. Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. This passage our Lord Jesus declares was fulfilled, when all his disciples, in the night wherein he was betrayed, forsook him and fled. It has, and shall have its accomplishment, in the destruction of the corrupt and hypocritical part of the professed church. Because of the sin of the Jews in rejecting and crucifying Christ, and in opposing his gospel, the Romans would destroy the greater part. But a remnant would be saved. And if we are his people, we shall be refined as gold; he will be God, and the end of all our trials and sufferings will be praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER 14

*The sufferings of Jerusalem. (1-7) Encouraging prospects, and the destruction of her enemies. (8-15) The holiness of the latter days. (16-21)*

### ◀3417 **Zechariah 14:1**

**Vs. 1-7:** The Lord Jesus often stood upon the Mount of Olives when on earth. He ascended from thence to heaven, and then desolations and distresses came upon the Jewish nation. Such is the view taken of this figuratively; but many consider it as a notice of events yet unfulfilled, and that it relates to troubles of which we cannot now form a full idea. Every believer, being related to God as his God, may triumph in the expectation of Christ's coming in power, and speak of it with pleasure. During a long season, the state of the church would be deformed by sin; there would be a mixture of truth and error, of happiness and misery. Such is the experience of God's people, a mingled state of grace and corruption. But, when the season is at the worst, and most unpromising, the Lord will turn darkness into light; deliverance comes when God's people have done looking for it.

### ◀3418 **Zechariah 14:8**

**Vs. 8-15:** Some consider that the progress of the gospel, beginning from Jerusalem, is referred to by the living waters flowing from that city. Neither shall the gospel and means of grace, nor the graces of the Spirit wrought in the hearts of believers by those means, ever fail, by reason either of the heat of persecution, or storms of temptation, or the blasts of any other affliction. Tremendous judgments appear to be foretold, to be sent upon those who should oppose the settlement of the Jews in their own land. How far they are to be understood literally, events alone can determine. The furious rage and malice which stir up men against each other, are faint shadows of the enmity which reigns among those who have perished in their sins. Even the inferior creatures often suffer for the sin of man, and in his plagues. Thus God will show his displeasure against sin.

**Zechariah 14:16**

**Vs. 16-21:** As it is impossible for all nations literally to come to Jerusalem once a year, to keep a feast, it is evident that a figurative meaning must here be applied. Gospel worship is represented by the keeping of the feast of tabernacles. Every day of a Christian's life is a day of the feast of tabernacles; every Lord's day especially is the great day of the feast; therefore every day let us worship the Lord of hosts, and keep every Lord's day with peculiar solemnity. It is just for God to withhold the blessings of grace from those who do not attend the means of grace. It is a sin that is its own punishment; those who forsake the duty, forfeit the privilege of communion with God. A time of complete peace and purity of the church will arrive. Men will carry on their common affairs, and their sacred services, upon the same holy principles of faith, love and obedience. Real holiness shall be more diffused, because there shall be a more plentiful pouring forth of the Spirit of holiness than ever before. There shall be holiness even in common things. Every action and every enjoyment of the believer, should be so regulated according to the will of God, that it may be directed to his glory. Our whole lives should be as one constant sacrifice, or act of devotion; no selfish motive should prevail in any of our actions. But how far is the Christian church from this state of purity! Other times, however, are at hand, and the Lord will reform and enlarge his church, as he has promised. Yet in heaven alone will perfect holiness and happiness be found.